



Abstract

Grant Number: 1F31NR007849-01

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PI Title:

Project Title: Coping strategies of sexually abused female children

Abstract: *Child sexual abuse is a serious problem that results in a variety of physical and psychological effects. In 1998 it was estimated that across the United States, 99,278 cases of child sexual abuse were confirmed by child protection agencies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998). Studies of children and adult survivors of child sexual abuse have documented the long term effects suffered by victims of sexual abuse (Conet & Schuerman, 1987; Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta & Akman, 1991; Kendall-Tackett et al, 1993; Neumann 1994, Neumann, Houskamp, Pollock, & Briere, 1996). What is not fully understood however is why some children appear to be asymptomatic while others suffer profound and severe psychological symptoms. It is this variability in behavioral, psychological, and physical effects that has provoked researchers to begin to try to determine what mediating factors play a role in the outcomes. While an array of studies have examined the long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse on adult survivors, minimal research has been done to examine the role mediators such as coping and social support have on the initial effects following child sexual abuse. Additionally, there is a lack of scientific data describing these factors in children of various ethnic groups. Therefore the specific aims of this research proposal are to 1) describe the coping strategies utilized by 7 to 9 year old female victims of intra-familial sexual abuse, 2) evaluate the relationship between the coping strategies utilized and the behavioral and psychological symptoms following abuse 3) describe the differences in coping styles used by various ethnic groups. The long term objective is to use the knowledge gained through this research to facilitate positive outcomes following child sexual abuse through education of health care professionals and family members working with child victims of sexual abuse on helpful coping strategies.*

Thesaurus Terms:

*child abuse, child psychology, coping, family structure /dynamics, female, health science
research potential, predoctoral investigator, sex abuse, training
child (0-11), disease /disorder proneness /risk, racial /ethnic difference, sign /symptom,
social support network
behavioral /social science research tag*

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Fiscal Year: 2001

Department: NONE

Project Start: 01-AUG-2001

Project End:

ICD: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NURSING RESEARCH

IRG: NRRC

